

Sermon Talking Points: Seeing Anew Delivered 02 14 21

2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9 (sermon)

Beloved of God, our congregation is coming to a critical time

Your leadership has called for this week to be a time of prayer and fasting that our hearts might be quickened to the presence and the calling of our God

As you have seen from our emails sent to you and the WhatsApp message we are praying from today Sunday Feb 14 – Feb 21st when we will pray together at our Zoom meeting at 11am

We are praying for Peace, both in the world and here at home. Praying for an end to the senseless violence that has racked this current time. We are praying for the Pandemic, that God would soon send an end to the plague that has gripped the world. And for a restoration of health and normalcy. We're praying that soon we will be able to gather together safely as a church family.

We are praying for our congregation to grow spiritually, and for our congregation and leadership to continue to seek and to do God's will.

We are in prayer for the health of our church and our individual families,

And since the 21st will be the first gathering that we will have as a body on Zoom, we are praying for a successful experience with Zoom when we are all logged in. That there would not be any technical glitch and that it will be a fruitful way to come together as a body of Christ.

Finally, we are praying for our area schools, instructors, staff and volunteers as they weigh a safe return to the classroom.

And on this transfiguration Sunday our scriptures remind us of those mountaintop experiences that we can have with God.

After all the scripture starts off ordinary enough.

Jesus with his 3 closest friends Peter, James and John, all going up to a mountain top.

Jesus steps out from the crowd to rest and to pray, as he often did.

And it is in the ordinary moment that Christ becomes unusually extraordinary

No sooner than they arrive do they notice that Jesus is “transfigured”. Suddenly made different.

He Glowed and as the scripture says, “.³His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.”

And if that is not out-of-the ordinary enough, two of faith’s most revered, and honored men suddenly appear by Jesus’ side.

Moses, the great law-giver, and Elijah, the great prophet

– the Law and the Prophets – symbolically paying respect to Jesus, in whom both are brought together.

This moment in time is both literally and figuratively a mountaintop experience.

Our disciples are amazed but quite understandable terrified at what is happening.

And then we hear disciple Peter speaking up and wanting to commemorate this moment and to honor the Christ, The Law and The Prophets he says 'let's build something'

What an earnest and wonderful disciple Peter is at this moment.

Not knowing what to do, but knowing that something should be done...

And just when our disciples thought this moment couldn't get any more amazing, a cloud overshadows the mountain top.

I imagine, that the damp air closes in and all the world and all around them begins to slip away from view because of the cloud.

Then the voice of God speaks from the cloud "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!"

Glowing appearances, the law and the prophet meeting in one and the voice of God.

This is indeed a mountaintop experience.

The three disciples they are changed.

How could they not be?

The three of them like the rest of the disciples had been asking “is this Messiah that was foretold?”

The disciples had searched for their lives in anticipation of the coming messiah

They like their people had waited.

They had wondered

And in this moment Jesus gave them a dramatic answer to their long awaited searching, their long prayed prayers.

And when it was all over, and Jesus, with Peter, James and John are headed back down the mountain, and Jesus says “tell no one about what they had seen.”

The three of them had a life altering moment in what I believe was an answer to their long awaited prayers.

And upon seeing this mountain top experience, they believed.

Those moments on that mountain would forever mark their lives and change the way they looked at everything.

And that's what these 'wow' moments with God can do.

When you suddenly are confronted with the Jesus that you didn't know.

You know that moment when you suddenly look at scripture and the excitement you get when you realize you are seeing something new that you hadn't seen before.

Newness.

It brings a new perspective to your life and your experiences with scripture.

It even brings a newness to the lives of others around you.

When we see something new of the God we love, we see past our own doubts, our own fears, our own limitations.

God had opened up something new in the familiar for them to see and it soon moved from familiar to extraordinary to wonderful

And we appreciate the mountaintop all the more when our experience has been in the valley.

Many of us have been in a valley of despair this past year.

Pandemic has kind of forced all of us in to a valley of sorts.

Yet all the while, God is beckoning to us to move a little higher with Him.

Come on the mountaintop in your prayer experience and see what I have to show you , he says to us

And yet my mind still asks God, why did Jesus say for them not to tell the story?

Every now and again we encounter Christ in our scriptures when he says to others, 'don't talk about this event just yet'

We see this:

after healing a man of leprosy (Mark 1:41-42), "Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 'see that you don't tell this to anyone...'" (Mark 1:43-44).

In our current advertising social media saturated culture, we tell everyone everything, repeatedly.

To our way of thinking, it would seem that Jesus would want everyone to know about the miracle.

But Jesus knew that publicity over such miracles might hinder His mission and divert public attention from His message

Perhaps it is that Jesus' mission is all about getting to know us personally.

Jesus' mission is about relationship.

Keeping our focus on our ever growing relationship with the Jesus who loves us and whom we should love in return.

It's one thing to hear about something new about people we are close to, but it is another thing entirely to experience a newness in people

Christ I believe has a mountaintop experience for each of us as his beloved disciples.

It maynot be as dramatic as what the= three disciples witnessed on the mountaintop, but God beckones us to cone away with Him. Get still and know him.

He may not have a dramatic message for us but He desires that we get close enough to Him in prayer, fasting, Bible study, worship, that we see him anew.

Like Pastor Donna's glasses, and mine and the eyeglasses of many of us watching this today, our perscripturion eyewear brings what is around us into focus.

So that we can see clearly.

Likewise, our time of prayer collectively as a congregation this week is designed for us to God anew.

He has so much to show us, and we don't want to miss any of it because our spiritual eyes are not focused to His spiritual 20/20 vision and insight

“Transfiguration” means according to webster, a complete change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state.

Christ was transfigured in front of them, and their lives changed or transfigured because of it.

\

Christ is calling us to the mountain top Mt Paran

I invite us to follow.

When Christ invites you to see Him more clearly,

That is simply not an invitation that you want to turn down.

We don't want our relationship with Christ to grow stale.

Especially when Christ is offering newness everyday.

Amen.

CHALLENGE

Our challenge this week is to accept an invitation to prayer and seeing God in a new way. We have much to pray about in this week to come

We are praying for peace, our leadership (church, local and global), pandemic, spiritual growth of our congregation, MPPC to continue to do God's will, Good health, our upcoming congregational meetings, and our schools as they seek to find ways to return to inperson learning safely.

As the psalmist says in Psalm 50:2 "the perfection of beauty, God shines forth"

Come, let's discover together what God wants to show us.

BENEDICTION

**Numbers 6:26 - "The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious
to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you
peace."
Amen**